

DNREC'S Division of Parks and Recreation receives major land donation from Nemours Foundation for Alapocas Run State Park

Trail improvements also announced

WILMINGTON – The Nemours Foundation has donated nearly 46 acres of significant forestland to the DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation's Alapocas Run State Park, located just outside Wilmington. The announcement was made today by Governor Jack Markell, DNREC Secretary David Small and Dr. Roy Proujansky, the Nemours Foundation's chief executive of Delaware Valley Operations.

"Alapocas Run State Park is truly an amazing urban oasis to be enjoyed not only by the residents of Wilmington, but also for visitors from the tri-state area and beyond," said Governor Jack Markell. "This generous donation by the Nemours Foundation, along with newly upgraded trails, will enable more people to experience the beauty and benefits of nature close to where they live and work, strengthening our quality of life while supporting continued economic growth."

"Alfred I. du Pont understood the healing and therapeutic benefits of nature, for both children and their families," said Dr. Roy Proujansky, chief executive of Delaware Valley Operations and Executive Vice President of The Nemours Foundation. "As stewards of Mr. du Pont's legacy, it is fitting then that these lands be transferred to the state of Delaware and improved for the enjoyment of the community. We applaud Governor Markell and his administration for their

continued partnership and tireless efforts to promote healthy living and a more walkable and bikeable Delaware.”

“With this generous addition of this lush, scenic park land, residents and visitors alike have even more opportunities to enjoy the diversity of trails that are more accessible, the Can-do playground, and all of the dozens of other amenities the park offers,” said DNREC Secretary David Small. “Alapocas Run State Park is a peaceful gem in an urban setting, providing a variety of activities and preserves a lasting natural legacy that enhances the quality of life for residents and users. It’s a special place to connect with nature and provide respite.”

In addition to the land donation, a section of the Northern Delaware Greenway Trail (part of the East Coast Greenway trail that goes from Maine to Florida) and a section of the Bancroft Trail have been upgraded to a paved surface, providing more accessibility and more year-round use and the opportunity to enjoy the mature woods and the rest of Alapocas Run State Park.

The two upgraded trail sections total about one mile. The Greenway Trail goes through Nemours Woods and connects the Delaware River to Brandywine Creek, passing through Bellevue State Park to Brighthelm Woods and Rockwood county parks to Wilmington’s Rock Manor Golf Course to Alapocas Run State Park.

The Bancroft Trail connects Alapocas Run State Park to Brandywine Park and the Brandywine Zoo. It passes through the Brandywine Park Condominiums, Wilmington Friends School and the Augustine Professional Building properties. These owners generously granted a trail easement through their lands in the 2000s.

“The Environmental Protection Agency is committed to supporting these types of collaborations that protect and

preserve precious greenspace,” said EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin. “It truly demonstrates the successful partnership the Nemours Foundation has with the state of Delaware in making a visible difference in our local communities.”

Nemours’ donation is part of a working partnership with Delaware State Parks that dates back more than 20 years. In the 1990s, a collaborative effort was begun to protect more public open space land along Brandywine Creek and around the City of Wilmington, by combining the resources of the city, county, state and the newly-created Delaware Greenways.

Through the state’s Open Space Program, Alapocas Run State Park began with an acquisition and land donation along Brandywine Creek. The state also assumed management of some city-owned parkland. At the same time the state, county, and city came together, along with the business community and area residents, to tackle a complex plan to realign Route 202 while maintaining the Rock Manor Golf Course and keeping and expanding the AstraZeneca pharmaceutical business in its current location.

During this very active time, Nemours and the Nemours Foundation were key players in many aspects of the overall project. Not only did they continue to run the world-renowned Alfred I. du Pont Hospital for Children and the Nemours Mansion & Gardens, the Nemours Foundation also provided land for a daycare center for the AstraZeneca employees and for road expansion. The foundation also provided valuable insight and information on the historic Blue Ball Barn, formerly part of the A.I. du Pont estate, now owned by Delaware State Parks.

A critical recreation component of this complicated project was a connection from Blue Ball Barn to Brandywine Creek through the Nemours Woods. This area was always recognized as an important landscape feature, protected and maintained by the A.I. du Pont family and then the Nemours Foundation. In

1999 the Nemours Foundation donated a conservation easement of more than 70 acres of this wooded area. It ensured that the area would not be developed and enabled a public use trail. Today's announcement reflects the donation of 46 of these acres the State, while retaining the remaining 24 acres under conservation easement.

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